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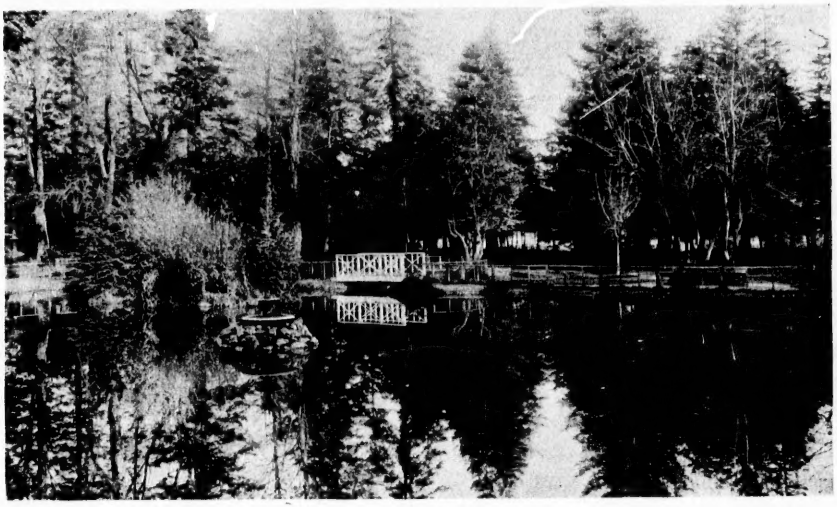

PHOTOGRAPH BY R. MAYNARD.

BEACON HILL PARK—VICTORIA, B.C.

THE QUEEN CITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

IT is not my intention in this brief sketch to treat of Victoria only from the standpoint of her beautiful location, her sporting and tourist attractions, and the exceedingly picturesque elements that encircle life in general within her borders; nor yet to deal solely with historical data or commercial aspects; but rather steering along that delightful middle course, (so much more attractive to the general reader, and so infinitely more satisfactory to the writer) wherein a few statistics and solid facts peep out from between the folds of description, I shall try to present a faithful silhouette of the Queen City as she appears in the eyes of the world to-day.

Away back in the year 1842 Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Douglas, Senior Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, a man of ability and great force of character, and a born leader of men, fixed upon the old settlement of Camosun, on the southern end of Vancouver Island, as the site for a new fort and trading post; and in the following spring the place was named Victoria. From that date until 1886 the history of the Queen City became practically that of the whole province. In 1851 Mr. James Douglas was appointed governor of Vancouver Island, being given equal jurisdiction over the new colony of British Columbia in 1858. He was knighted in 1864, and when on August 20th, 1866, the mainland and the Island of Vancouver were united as a Crown Colony he became governor of the whole province.

The parliamentary history of British Columbia is both interesting and complicated, covering, as it does, the days of the Island's supremacy, the brief existence of a rival capital at New Westminster, and the records of the Legislative Assembly of the Crown Colony; also, more recently, the doings of Parliament since the province entered Confederation on July 20th, 1871.

But it is chiefly to the aspects and prospects of modern Victoria that I would now draw your attention, and a more pleasant subject for comment could scarcely be found throughout all the length and breadth of Canada, the

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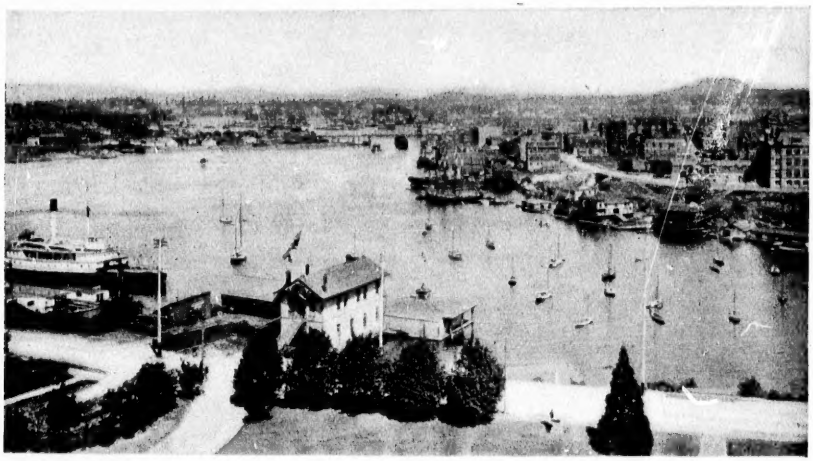
Can. Mag. Jan 1899



EDWARDS BROS., PHOTOGRAPHERS. VICTORIA—THE QUEEN

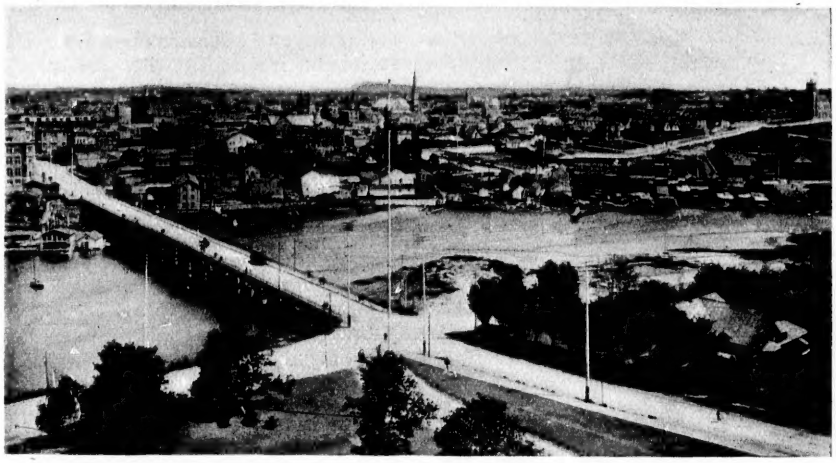
Queen City being one of the most exquisite places in all this beautiful Dominion of which we are the proud sons and daughters.

Sea-girt by the Straits of Juan de Fuca, and with the snow-capped range of Olympian Mountains lying to the south-west, Victoria is situated on the edge of a rich agricultural district, where the farms and fields of prosperous settlers evidence what can be done by the energy of men aided by a temperate climate; for be the sky blue with summer's reflected glory, or grey with the clouds of an autumn rain, the thermometer never plays tricks upon unwary ranchers, nor, except in very rare instances, goes beyond the moderate limits of 33° and 80° Fahrenheit.

As a summer resort for tourists Victoria is altogether delightful, offering capital hotel accommodation, sport of every kind, fishing, shooting, boating, golf, cricket, tennis, and the most beautiful drives and bicycle rides imaginable. In this locality, alone in all the vast province of British Columbia, are the country lanes and highways inhedged for miles by thorn and thicket, where brambles luxuriate, and wild flowers struggle for supremacy with trailing vines and upstart weeds. Along such roads, bordered by well-cultivated fields, or out past Oak Bay, close to the golf links, where the sweep of the blue Pacific waters washes up over the rocky boulders that fringe the shore, one may cycle or ride for miles; or, taking some other direction, have a specially attractive goal in view, Cadboro' Bay, William's Head, Goldstream, Cedar Hill, and a dozen other equally lovely suburbs being well within the possibility of a pleasant day's excursion.

THE SEALING FLEET IN VICTORIA HARBOUR.

Boating, too, may be indulged in up the gorge, or



CITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

two miles to the north where, in Esquimalt Harbour, the vessels of Her Majesty's navy lie at anchor, and the surrounding fortifications tell of the well-defended position of this magnificent naval station.

Constituting the western outpost of the Dominion the coast defences are here of special importance ; therefore, besides being the headquarters of the Pacific Squadron, detachments of Royal Marine Artillery and Royal Engineers have been quartered in the barracks at Macaulay point, whilst the militia force, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Gregory, is an exceptionally fine corps.

The main part of the Queen City is built on the slope of a hill at whose foot lies the harbour of Victoria (as distinct from Esquimalt Harbour), where all the shipping trade of the port is carried on, and the wharves of the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, R. P. Rithet & Co., and others, line the shore. Connected by excellent steamship services with the Puget Sound ports, as well as Vancouver, the Fraser River, and Californian ports and Alaskan points, the docks are always busy, the transoceanic vessels of the Canadian Pacific line to China and Japan, of the Canadian Australian route, and of the Northern Pacific S.S. line, all making Victoria a port of call. It may here be mentioned that the tonnage of the port is amongst the largest in the Dominion.

During the rush to the Klondyke last summer an immense outfitting trade was done by merchants in the Queen City, and a great impetus was thereby given to trade This formed the commencement of a new era of good times, for Victoria, like her sister cities on the

THREE CHINESE SAILOR-BOYS.

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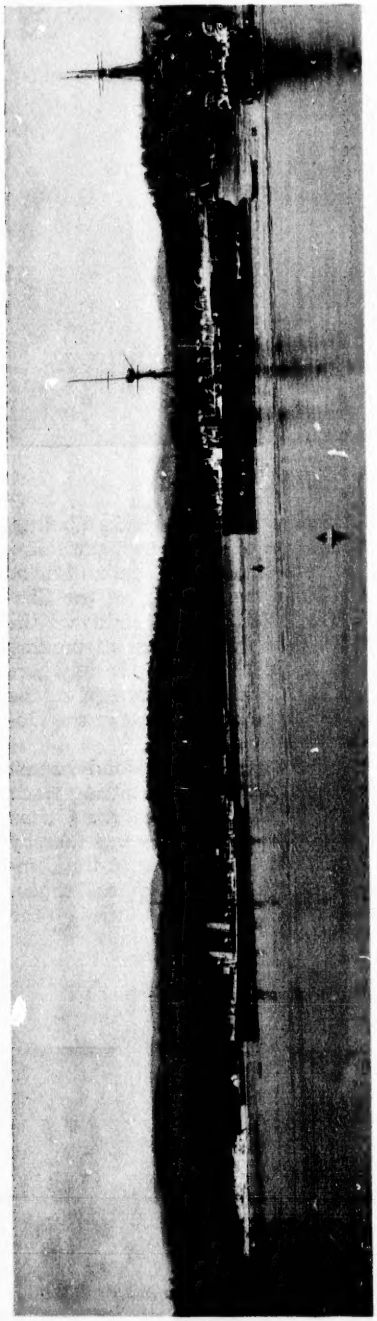


BRITISH WARSHIPS IN ESQUIMAULT HARBOUR, B.C.

PHOTOGRAPH BY R. MAYNARD.

Pacific Coast, experienced for a season a wave of business depression that seriously interfered with commercial development.

Now, however, all is once more prosperity and progress in the west, and the large wholesale trade done in Victoria stands on a solid basis. There is an unusually large proportion of large wholesale houses in the city, as compared with the population (some 26,000). The capital which backs these firms is large and chiefly local.

Enterprises of all kinds have at various times been established within the city limits, amongst which may be mentioned fruit-preserving, pickling and spice factories, flour, feed and rice mills, boot, shoe and trunk-making, soap and powder works, iron foundries, machine shops, furniture and biscuit factories, and chemical and metallurgical works; whilst many of the retail shops in the town would astonish eastern eyes, so favourably do they compare with those of Ontario and Quebec centres.

Though the coal mines of Nanaimo and Wellington are situated about eighty miles from Victoria, a mention of them may fairly be included in this sketch, the industry being chiefly owned by the Dunsmuirs, whose name ranks high amongst those of the most prominent of Victoria's pioneers. The export from these coal mines last year was valued at $2,445,379.

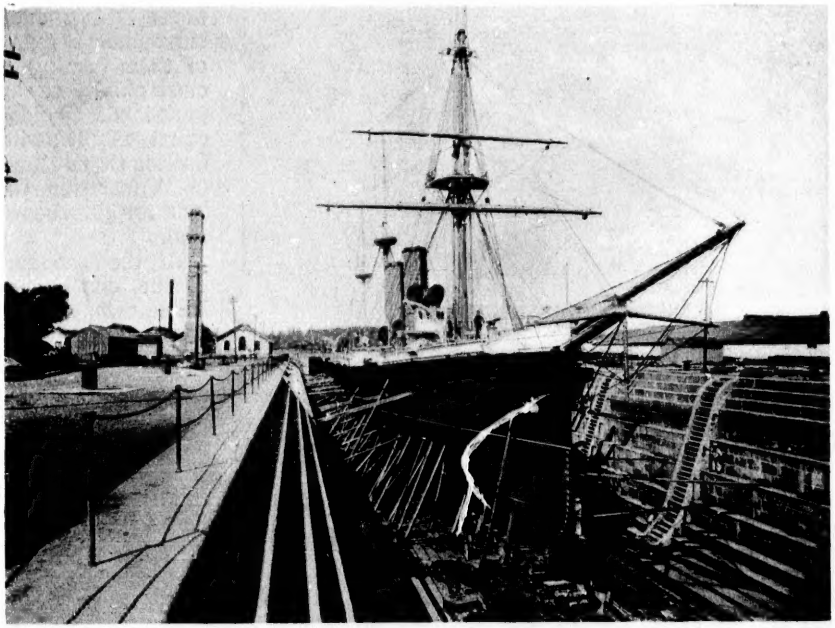
To the Queen City alone belongs, almost exclusively, the sealing industry of British Columbia, for, with one or two exceptions, all the sealing vessels make Victoria their home port. In 1897 the boats brought back a cargo valued at $750,000, of which about $500,000 was the product of Behring Sea.

Many fine buildings ornament the city. The new Post Office and Custom House built of grey stone, the Jubilee Hospital, the Drill Shed, and some of the business "blocks" are tangible proofs of the stability of the place, whilst capital telephone, electric light, and street car services, water-works, sewerage and other public systems testify to

the fact that in this community, established on the western extremity of Canadian soil, not only are all the comforts of civilization obtainable, but the most up-to-date luxuries afforded by electricity, steam, and rail are also at the disposal of residents and travellers alike. Victoria is the terminus of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway, and of the Victoria and Sidney Railway.

Of all the public structures, however, that adorn the locality, the new Parliament Building stands out pre-eminently, an edifice of great architectural beauty. It is built of local grey stone, ornamented inside with Italian marbles, wrought iron and stained glass, finished in the native woods of British Columbia, such as alder, cypress, cedar, fir, and bird's-eye maple. It comprises within its walls a splendid Provincial Library and Museum full of excellent specimens of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms in British Columbia, and curios of the Indian tribes on the Pacific Coast. There are also a remarkably fine Legislative Hall, all the governmental special departments, a capital cuisine, luncheon rooms and other accessories,—indeed, there is not a finer Provincial House of Assembly in the Dominion.

The location of the building is superb, and is the pride of the residents of Victoria. On a fresh summer morning, when the sun is shining overhead, and the blue waters of James Bay come rippling in at one's feet, whilst the peaks of the Olympian Mountains jag the line of the horizon against the scintillating sky, flecked here and there with cloud-forms, soft as thistledown, what grander sight can the eye of resident or tourist desire than that magnificent, stern, stone pile, with its softening foreground of green grass lawns, and grass-green trees?

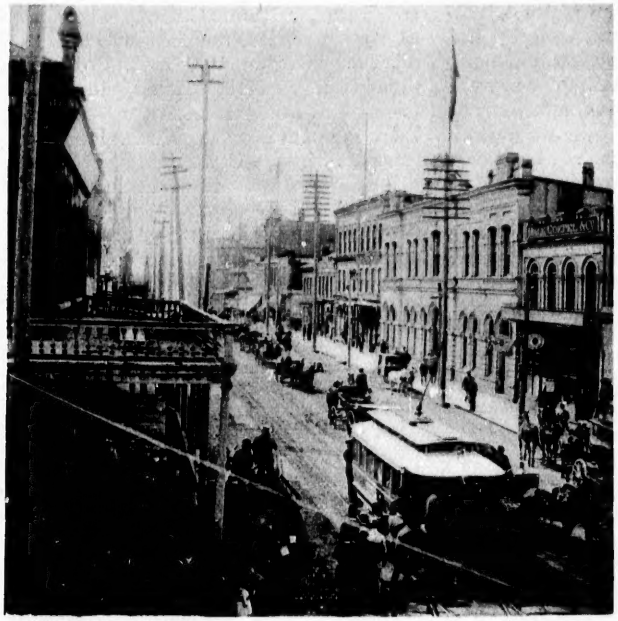


BAILEY BROS., PHOTOGRAPHERS.

H.M.S. AMPHION IN DRY DOCK AT ESQUIMAULT.

The private residences in the Queen City are very fine indeed, and stand in gardens sweet-smelling with a thou-

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF B. C.



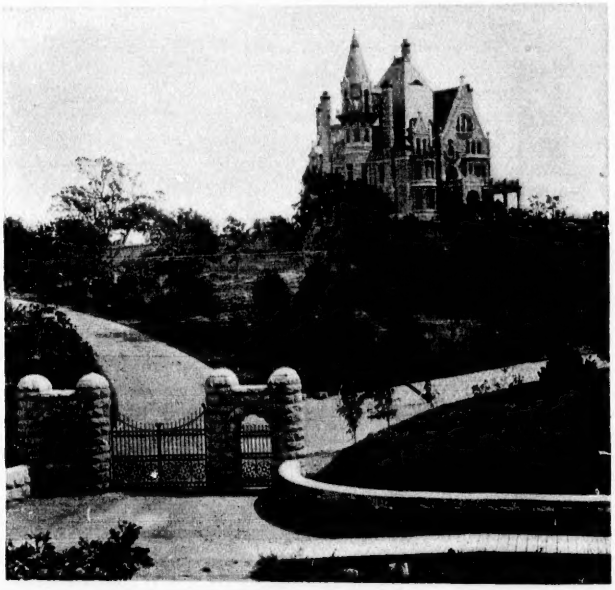
TRUEMAN, PHOTOGRAPHER.

GOVERNMENT STREET, VICTORIA.

sand blossoms, where roses grow to perfection, and the oak and the elm flourish in the land of the pine, the cedar, and the fir. The red brick walls of large and comfortable mansions, o'er-grown with ivy and westeria, remind one of England's Elizabethan houses, the grounds surrounding many of them bearing a close affinity to the park-lands of older countries. The wild flowers that abound on Vancouver Island are most beautiful.

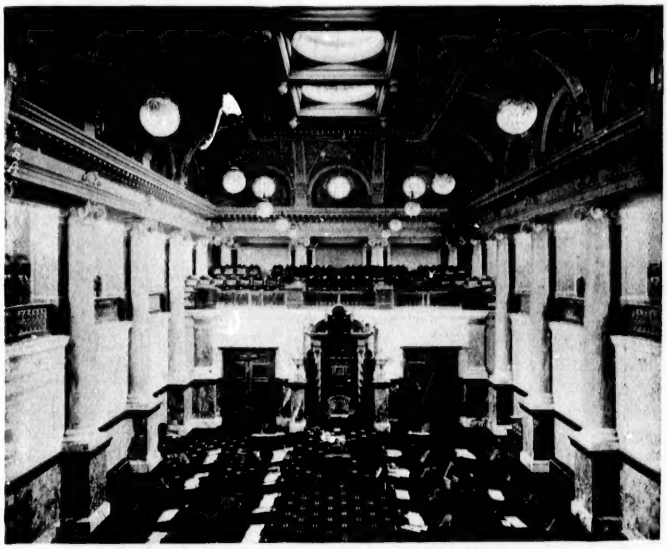
At the one end of the city stands Chinatown, with its Joss House full of carved and hideous deities, and a theatre where the performers are all men. Unless the play lasts every night from eight o'clock until dawn is breaking over the Gulf of Georgia, an infuriated and disappointed audience bombards the stage, refusing to be pacified until the entertainment is continued for another few hours.

Here the stores, for diversity of wares, could discount even the typical "Old Curiosity Shop" of Charles Dickens' imagination, and naturally all the sights that usually characterize the Mongolian quarters on the Pacific



CRAIGDARROCH—THE DUNSMUIR RESIDENCE.

Coast may also be seen in this neighbourhood. There are dozens of Chinamen in loose, neutral-hued garments, little children in brilliant - coloured padded silk coats and quaint round caps, and women of the lower classes grouped in twos and threes about the doors of their shacks.



BLACKIE, PHOTOGRAPHER.

INTERIOR OF LEGISLATIVE HALL.

But though, of course, the local low-caste Chinese women go about as freely as do their white sisters, there is in Victoria a girl-wife, who, being of higher caste and having feet only two inches long, can scarcely walk at all; she therefore goes out to take the air in a carriage.

There is something indescribably pathetic about the life of such a woman, apart from the squalid existence of the ordinary Mongolians who infest our British Columbian coast towns. For to see her totter across the room, catching at the furniture in order to steady herself *en route;* to try to put your thumb into her tiny shoe, and find you cannot succeed, so narrow is the little article of silk and kid she has embroidered to form a covering for her poor mutilated feet; to note the immobility of her colourless face upon which resignation is so indelibly stamped, is to realize the helpless, hopeless tenor of her life.

Thanks be to Heaven, the children of this woman run about as nature intended they should; thus in one family, at least, the barbarous practice of binding up the nether limbs of babies until the toes drop off, and the foot is all pushed up into a distorted mass about the ankle, has died out.

In the Queen City, as in Vancouver, the Chinese domestic servant is ubiquitous, whilst his brother Mongolians wash, or rather ruthlessly tear up, the Victorians' clothes, or sell them vegetables and fish with cheerful impartiality.

Though in this sketch I have only been able to touch briefly upon a few headings connected with the commerce, shipping, public industries and institutions, the sporting and tourist attractions of Victoria, and also to refer incidentally to its eminent desirability as a residential locality, yet with all the inherent pride of the province, that is ever the sign-manual of the true westerner, I trust that fresh interest in our beautiful British Columbia may hereby be aroused in the minds of those before whom there still lies the glorious prospect of "a trip out west."

Julian Durham.